538 native classification is not here followed.
538
801 The motif of "threes" appears in all stories whether mythical or historical. Thus Tamayei flies three times to Pukapuka from Tonga in the form of a bird before he sees the head of the stone appearing above the water. Lingutaimoa calls her lost pet manini fish three times, then she calls for a wave to take her to the horizon: the first and second waves are not good, but the third wave bears her to her destination. The use of this "three" motif together with other types of repetition serves as a technical device to heighten suspense, increase the dramatic qualities of a narrative and produce an exciting climax.

538 Infrequent occurrences of the motif of animal transformation are found in the folktales and stories of gods' contact with humans. The god Tamayei comes to Pukapuka twice as a bird, the third times as a god. The children of Punga and Punga Momoto are transformed into land animals and sea animals. Leiakunavai is transformed into a rat because her children insist on bringing her husband back to her island. The god Ngaliyeyeu transforms himself into a bird in order to seduce a woman, and in another story of Ngaliyeyeu and his friend the god Te Awuawu, birds transform themselves into men in order to assist a canoe crew from Loto to steal nuts from Motu Kotawa. A final case of transformation occurs in the story of Vaetuaniu where a spirit becomes a log in order to drift to an island of children. This completes the examples of transformation, whether animal or otherwise;
[171] it is evident that the motif is not as common in Pukapukan stories as it is in other parts of Polynesia. Only a few stories are told in which all the characters are animals. That such stories are found in Pukapuka is further indication of the western Polynesian phrasing of the culture.

Myths

773 The myths of Pukapuka are few in number. They concern the lifting up of the sky; the pulling up of the land of Tonga by Maui; the testing Maui by the gods; the naming and coloring of the fishes by Maui, Yina, and a third culture hero, Walemate; other fragmentary stories of the goddess Yina; a fragment about the discovery of fire by Maulkatoto [see 1: Beaglehole and Beaglehole, p. 97, category 773, 539 or 116 --analyst.] said to be unrelated to the better known Polynesian hero Maui Potiki; and finally the story of Lata. These stories help to explain natural phenomena. They link up with the stories of the origin of Pukapuka [see 1: Beaglehole and